5/23/77

Dear Kevin,

The only thing wrong with Lardner's yesterday's story about how your Klein and Fenton behaved is that Lardner understated enormously.

I presume you are among those who would like to know what Hall knows. This need not be what he says, even under oath. I know him fairly well.

Or did.

Your people, after careers of rigging cases, could not play it straight. Which is exactly what I warned Art Kevin about. The result is that they'll probably get nothing from Hall. Besides, he is a strange one and they don't know enough.

I tell you quite frankly that if Kevin, a dear friend, had listened to me he would not have been part of this. But he also wants truth out and like most people he trusted a Congressional committee.

I'm not going to give you any compromising information. I will tell you that after countless reporters had spoken to him, after he had gone to court and beat the Garrison subpoena, I talked to him and he ent voluntarily. The original deal was that I would go with him and we'd have adjoining rooms, his ideas. I could not. He and Howard both went after I spoke to them. So there was not an unwillingness.

Since then this strange type has had other experiences. Over the years he has come to trust Art. He also does not know you people. So he wanted a witness with him in the event there was some story cooked up on him, not unusual.

There is nothing your people know. Here I should say period. I'd intended adding that Hall and Art do not know, nothing ~~has~~ that has to be secret. When all wanted someone with him I know of no right they had to refuse and then to behave like thugs with Art, Art's description.

I would like to tell you more but it might be compromising. I do tell you that I have felt toward Art as one does to a brother although I have not seen him in nine years. I have never known him to lie or exaggerate. There is no professional reporter in the country less against an investigation than he is. It really took something to turn him off but your people were up to it. Your people are still spooky. Art took them to a large and comfortable studio and they insisted on leaving it because it was equipped with microphones for broadcasting. They actually believed he was tap ing them clandestinely through VISIBLE mikes! A LICENSED radio station? Pulling a crime? And for what? Dean? Oldtmans?

And were this all real, have you any idea ~~where~~ if they had not been McCarthyites, Art's description on throwing them out, what else there is, to whom else to speak? Do you think, for example, that I could possibly tell your people? Even you or Donovan? You are tracing my steps of a decade ago.

I am reasonably confident that before you receive this the word will go through your office that those secret CIA agent-reporters have engaged in morepropaganda. Baloney. I am responsible for Lardner's knowing. And if you think he exaggerate, phone Kevin. He will probably do more. Believe me I've encouraged it. In my view the press is also one of the elements of our society and it, too, ought be free and unintimidated. It is not only that Art is my friend. On any level this was no way for any Congressional representatives to behave. Besides which they blew it, assuming they were ready for it, which I doubt. Your people are still looking for cheap headlines, despite the absence of recent leaks.

I had nothing to do with Lardner's story. I told him and with Art's permission I gave him Art's phone. If I had given him the story and he had listened it would have been hotter. This was, in my view, an authentic outrage. What I will oppose. Hastily with best personal wishes,